

# Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion

PUBLIC LIBRARY  
DETROIT  
DEC 22 1953

VOL. XIII, No. 21

DECEMBER 14, 1953

\$2.50 per year; 10 cents per copy

## Lay Witness in France

IT is worth while for American Protestants to know something of the way the lines are drawn as between the Gospel and the "world" in other lands and other confessions. Of special interest are the vicissitudes of this engagement in France where the modern crisis has taken on such acute form in various aspects of the life of the nation. There comes to hand here a significant documentation in the publication in English of a number of "open letters" written by Francois Mauriac, the great Catholic novelist.<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, it is worth while following the Parisian daily, the *Figaro*, if only for the frequent contributions to it of such short articles by Mauriac, not to mention those of Duhamel, Andre Siegfried, Jean Schlumberger and others. In the case of Mauriac especially we see a phenomenon absent from the American picture, that of the role of the Christian man-of-letters in public life.

The *homme de lettres* in the Continental sense does not exist in America where even the most famous writers command no such genuine prestige. The tradition in France offers him an authority and a rostrum which can be of wide influence in matters that go far beyond the arts. Members of this guild become almost by necessity publicists and frequently journalists. Where the writer in question is also a Christian, a sounding board is offered him for Christian apologetic and polemic in the central forum of public life. The witness and controversies sustained by figures of such various faiths as Mauriac, Claudel, Camus and Malraux in their respective journals attain to extraordinary brilliancy and constitute a unique public debate of matters affecting the spiritual life of the West. The names of Bernanos in the recent past and of Charles Péguy at the beginning of the century illustrate further the almost prophetic role of the Christian novelist or poet in national issues of education, university reform, anti-Semitism, military training and politics. That this is possible in France dates from a long tradition but is connected especially with the fact that the French nation is like a family, though a family many of whose children are poisoned against each other.

Mauriac's letters and articles deal with intra-Catholic issues including such matters as his defense of the priests-in-industry (*prêtres-ouvriers*) against their discouragement by Church authorities. The present collection includes a striking statement on the significance of the great Catholic novelist, Bernanos, the radical critic not only of modern civilization but of many wordly aspects of the Church. Mauriac agrees that "the note of Eden-like purity, of infinite gentleness, of heart-rending sadness" which Claudel ascribed to Rimbaud is the same as the one that charms us in Bernanos. But he finds a certain sterility in the latter's refusal of compromise. "Men," says Mauriac, "must stay in their native land and consent to work in the mud. . . . Simple Christians must be willing to dirty their hands in politics." It is France as it is that must be served and not some ideal France on the level of Joan of Arc, "not the excessively sublime image that Bernanos holds up above our reach through the centuries and into the heavens."

Mauriac's capacity for blistering polemic appears here in his excoriation of his fellow Catholic, Cocteau, in connection with the latter's play *Bacchus*, which held the Renaissance Church up to scorn. This talent was also well illustrated a year or so ago in the *Figaro* in a phenomenal taunting of the two members of the French Communist Executive who refused to make their submission after their rebuke by Moscow. Lucky for you, wrote Mauriac, that you live in a land that defends the freedom of the individual and protects you from the NKVD. Yet take care, he added, what taxi you enter and look over your shoulder when you turn a corner!

In one of the present papers Mauriac expostulates with Albert Camus over the latter's espousal of the internationalism of Garry Davis, in the course of which he vents a diatribe against England and America, Mauriac also deplores the publication of the now ancient correspondence of Claudel and Andre Gide. Why should the two writers give to the public such intimate matters? Claudel like Mauriac and earlier Jacques Rivière had hoped for years for the conversion of Gide, but that stubborn empiricist and humanist had held out under every

<sup>1</sup>Letters on Art and Literature, by Francois Mauriac. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1953.

attack of his friends. Indeed, in his last book Gide defiantly warned that any death-bed repentance claimed by Mother-Church should be discounted. We have here an example of the radical chasm between the two Frances. The moving portrayal of the Gospel which recurs, as in Mauriac's novels, so here, and especially in certain pages on the priesthood, cannot but win a response from the Protestant. But even in this great Catholic we can detect a disturbing pinch of incense and an inability to appreciate the modern *Sitz-im-Leben* of a Gide or a Camus, and we can recognize the special handicap under which an apologist of this kind labors. Gide commented on certain of his Roman Catholic critics and companions: "Such a lack of contact with things as they are, with the external world and with reality, is past comprehension." Nothing is more exhausting, he wrote, than this Catholic polemic, "the apologist offering himself a host of advantages that the disinterested critic should deny himself." And with a touch of malice he says of

the converts among his friends: "Their worst faults thereupon drew encouragement at being placed in the service of God."

Yet the shafts of Gide were always far from striking the best elements in the lofty evangelical witness of such men as Mauriac and Claudel. The outsider can only regret that the two parties in the argument were so far out of range of each other. The Catholic apologetic, moreover, with so much in its favor, would be more effective if it were not often so sure of itself, paradoxical as this may appear for the Christian. But this only reminds us of the radical cleavage in French society and the consequent special difficulties of Christian evangelism, even where the Christian lay witness has so favorable an opportunity to make itself heard. The situation in Anglo-Saxon lands offers its own obstacles to an effective encounter with the disaffected multitudes, but we are not confronted with hostilities that resemble those of an ancient family feud as is too often the case in France. A.N.W.

## Editorial Notes

The 79th birthday anniversary of Winston Churchill and the publication of the sixth volume of his history of the war "Triumph and Tragedy" offers occasion for some reflections on the unpredictability of human history, in both its personal and collective dimensions. Churchill, now the most distinguished of living statesmen and probably the most celebrated of world leaders in the first half of the present century, was once upon a time a politician, so obviously ambitious and so seemingly irresponsible that he lost his place in the British cabinet during the first world war. The disaster which overcame the adventure at Gallipoli, which he had sponsored, was the ostensible cause of his dismissal. But actually it was but the occasion for the explosion of resentments against him by members of both parties who distrusted him as a too obviously ambitious man. When and how did he acquire the grace and the magnanimity which give him his present eminence?

Churchill in a previous volume of his war history records the pathetic egotism of the French Admiral Darlan, who remained loyal to the Vichy government and shunned the hero's role which Churchill had designed for him, because Petain's government was able to satisfy his life-long ambition and make him Minister of Marine. Churchill made this observation on Darlan's action "I thought then, as I think now, how vain are the calculations of self interest." When did Churchill learn this lesson? Or did he ever learn it? May not his glorious career represent, not the annihilation of self-interest but its subordination to the more creative aspects

of statesmanship? Can mortal men ever achieve any larger emancipation?

Churchill's present policies, compared with past events reveal the unpredictable character of man's collective history. Churchill became the indispensable leader of the free world because he gauged the Nazi peril so early and so correctly. He is now criticized by some American journalists because he insists so consistently on a high level conference with Russia, and because he has made the attainment of peace the "dearest prize" of his life. This emphasis upon peace is supposed by his American critics to represent the softness of his dotage.

But this is the same Churchill who foresaw the Russian peril even before we had finished with the Nazi one and who tried abortively to convince the American command to adopt policies which would have prevented the Russian inundation of the continent. His counsels were rejected as obtruding purely "political" considerations into a military task (not very much has been made of his disclosures in America because they are embarrassing to both parties as they reflect no credit on the acumen of foresight of either Roosevelt or Eisenhower). This is the same Churchill who now wants to leave no stone unturned to convince the Communists that we want peace, not at any price, but that we want it very fervently. Perhaps his wisdom has found a way through the dogmatic predictions about history to the real unpredictabilities. He may be right in charting a course which assumes, neither the inevitability of war nor the necessity of "appeasing" Soviet power. Perhaps providence will crown his

refusal to follow the anxious fears of his contemporaries in this, as in a previous age, with the success of a future which avoids the dread scourge of an atomic war while at the same time tyranny

is resisted. Churchill has at least proved that it is wise to learn from the lessons of the past but not to make any past event into an analogy for unique present perplexities.

R.N.

## Some Lessons from the "White Affair"

ROBERT McAfee BROWN

IT has been difficult for otherwise sober-minded citizens to evaluate the progress of events in the "White affair" except in violently partisan terms. With dreary certainty it has been possible to predict how the various participants and observers in the case would react, by the simple expedient of noting their prior political loyalties. Perhaps enough of the first heat and fury has now passed so that a less "partisan" evaluation can be given, though readers who disagree with the following analysis may doubt its genuinely attempted non-partisan character.

1. Even if he is given every benefit of the doubt, it is still clear that the method by which Mr. Brownell chose to fire his opening shot inevitably lent a vigorous partisan tinge to all the rest of the discussion. If an Attorney-General of the United States has serious charges to make against a former president, there are appropriate ways and means for him to do so; making the charges in an after-dinner speech at a luncheon club is not one of them. Let it be hoped that the Administration has learned a lesson at this point. If it has significant information to reveal to the American people, let it do so with dignity and fairness, and not in a manner which will inevitably be interpreted as "playing politics."

2. While Mr. Truman in his broadcast presented a plausible case to those who were already predisposed to believe him, his own hand was certainly weakened by the previous off-the-cuff comments he had made and had later to modify or retract. On his part, as well as on the part of many of his accusers, a silence, until the facts were in hand, would have done much to clear the air. Mr. Truman's action with regard to Mr. White can be defended as a wise attempt to make possible the continued investigation of a man against whom more evidence was needed; but it can also be attacked as an unwise attempt to shield former mistakes on a high policy level. That there were instances in which communist sympathizers had positions of some authority seems clear. To go beyond such assessments, however, is surely to go beyond the evidence, and here the American public, as well as Mr. Truman and Mr. Brownell, might learn to be a little more circumspect.

3. We can already see how damaging the handling of the event has been in our relationship with other nations. Canada is rightly upset at the free use made of testimony given by one of its representatives, and the press of the rest of the free world has

been overwhelmingly of the opinion that partisan political concerns have in this instance been put above national and international concerns. It is a rather striking commentary on the relative political health of America and Great Britain, that during the time the charge of "treason" was being bandied about in Washington by one Administration against a former Administration, the British were having a testimonial dinner at which Sir Winston Churchill could speak in the highest terms of the contribution made to the life of his nation by his arch political rival, Clement Atlee. All of us need to learn that what goes on in Washington these days is not just a little chummy internicene exchange among Americans, but that it has implications reaching to the far corners of the earth, and that the whole method of handling the White affair has, whether correctly or not, brought the charge of McCarthyism-in-High-Places against those now representing us in Washington.

4. One aspect of the affair from which most Americans, regardless of party loyalty, should be able to derive satisfaction, is the way in which Congressman Velde has been so thoroughly sat on, not only by Democrats but by his own Republican colleagues. Subsequent events must not allow us to forget Mr. Velde's mad dash to beat his fellow investigators in the subpoena sweepstakes. The fact that Mr. Truman, Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Clark to a man refused to honor his rash of subpoenas with no further challenge from Mr. Velde is perhaps not so significant as the fact that many of Mr. Velde's own party members were outspoken in their contempt for what he attempted to do. This is a sign of at least a residual political sanity, which members of both parties must try to keep alive.

Two facts, however, make it necessary to speak with less than complete hopefulness about this turn of events. (a) Mr. Velde is still a man of considerable power, albeit a man with a considerably tarnished reputation. His action reveals him not simply as a publicity-hungry politician, but as a man with a fundamentally totalitarian mind. He willingly and knowingly by-passed the democratic procedures for the calling of new witnesses, upon which his committee had only recently agreed. He appears as one who is supremely uninterested in democratic procedures. (b) There are still elements in Mr. Velde's party who appear to have questioned only his tactical blunder, rather than the motives which prompted it. Thus while Mr. Velde has succeeded in emblazoning his own inadequacies across the whole

world, he may also still have more support in high circles than one likes to contemplate.

5. The nation as a whole must direct a plea to President Eisenhower. No one can doubt that Mr. Eisenhower's intentions are good and that his heart is in the right place. His speech before the Anti-Defamation League demonstrated that. But it is time for the responsible members of both parties to plead with him for a more realistic recognition of what is going on, and to urge him to relate high and splendid generalities more directly to the present political scene. His press conference after the White story "broke," showed that he did not understand what all the shouting was about. His amazement at the newspapermen's concern about it is unsettling. Republicans and Democrats alike must plead with him, either to do more of the signal-calling himself for his "team," or else to get some new quarterbacks and coaches. Mr. Eisenhower still commands the moral respect of a vast segment of this country, and many who opposed him last November continue to wish him well. But it will become increasingly difficult for them to do so if he does not come to see that there are some irreconcilable elements within his own party and that before too long he is going to have to come down on one side or the other.

The above comments, the writer hopes, should command the assent of most readers of this journal, regardless of which side of the political fence they live on. There is, however, a further event concerning which it is neither desirable nor possible to speak with anything approaching calm detachment, and which puts the "White affair" in a new dimension of significance.

This event is the speech of Senator McCarthy on Tuesday, November 24.

With ominous silence, Senator McCarthy stayed off the stage while it was being shared by half a dozen contestants. With characteristic timing, he then seized the stage in such a way as to make himself the center of the whole act. With characteristic dishonesty, he used the occasion of a presumed "reply" to Mr. Truman, to attack not merely Mr. Truman, but Mr. Eisenhower, the Republican party, the Democratic party, and, in fact, everyone in the nation who does not agree that the Senator is infallible. More clearly than ever before in its internal history, the nation saw a fascist mind at work—a man prepared to use smear, innuendo, lie, and half-truth, to destroy anyone and anything that stands in his way.

To attribute the growth of Communism to supposed connivance with Communism by our national leaders, as the Senator did, is a perverted manipulation of historical facts, which incidentally reveals how pathetically ignorant he is of the real *inner* dynamic and power of Communism. The use which was made of the Republican retention of Mr. John Davies is a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts, as the Senator had been informed by his own party

that Mr. Davies had hired communists in the CIA for the express purpose of counter-espionage, and had been rigorously defended in this matter by the former head of the CIA, Mr. Bedell Smith. Here the Senator suggests that a method of dealing with Communism of which he does not approve, is tantamount to disloyalty. These are merely two instances where deliberate deception was used by the Senator, and they are of such a magnitude as to make his normal quota of false statements (such as the claim that Mr. Truman's definition of McCarthyism was "word for word, comma for comma" lifted from the *Daily Worker*) appears as quite ordinary examples of his complete disregard for facts.

There is not even anything brave or courageous about his sweeping claim that he, and nothing else, is the main issue of the '54 campaign. For no matter what happens, he emerges the winner:

If the Republicans retain control next fall, this vindicates McCarthyism, and he is their only hope in '56.

If the Republicans do not retain control, this is simply proof that they have not yet sufficiently embraced the principles of McCarthyism, and he is their only hope in '56.

Thus McCarthy can take credit for a victory which is *not* his, and disavow responsibility for a defeat which *is* his. On its own terms, the logic is irrefutable. There is only one Saviour for the American people, and you know his name.

Now not only is this a false and misleading set of options, but it is a monstrous situation for the American nation. And the speech makes clear, in all of its naked dishonesty, the sort of man Senator McCarthy is. It should make clear to those people who "haven't made up their minds about McCarthy" that he will use any means to become the most powerful man in America. Americans with any sense of moral decency must see in him an example of "creeping fascism" and must repudiate him totally and utterly.

And this is precisely the plea which must be left at the door of the responsible members of the Republican party, since he is, for better or for worse, their boy. It is a plea which has the word "urgent" marked all over it. Failure thus far to take a real stand concerning the junior Senator from Wisconsin has caused many people in this country, and many more people across the face of the world, to wonder if the Republican party is becoming dominated by McCarthyism. His "use" of the White affair to foster his own ambitions makes it imperative that the responsible elements in his party repudiate him, or the only conclusion that can legitimately be drawn is that he is the one who is "calling the signals."

At the present moment, President Eisenhower, with his immense popularity the country over, could do this. What is more, he could carry the country with him. But if he does not do this quickly and decisively, he may discover too late that the time has passed when he will be able to do it at all.

# The Responsible Society: Political Aspects\*

COL. FRANCIS P. MILLER

## I. Introduction

Four basic considerations provide the setting for a discussion of the meaning of "the responsible society" for political life in America.

The phrase itself has proved its usefulness during the period since it was first defined at Amsterdam in 1948. It is suggestive, broad, and in its implications gathers up the most important contemporary social issues. It originated as a substitute for the phrase "free society," and as such indicates a certain balance between undue emphasis upon freedom and undue emphasis upon order.

Political problems are not just the reflection of economic problems. Although there is inter-action between them, politics exists in its own right and must be dealt with in its own terms. Political structures have their particular role in the struggle for justice and in the fight against totalitarianism.

There is no ready-made Christian doctrine of the state. In the New Testament there are varying conceptions, indicated by the contrast between *Romans* 13 in which the state is regarded as a part of God's order, and *Revelation* in which the state is viewed as a great beast. Throughout Christian history, there are important variations of conception—for instance in regard to the right of revolution and the place of sovereignty. In the ecumenical movement, there are several clear assumptions:

—it is universally recognized that the state has a place in the providence of God for the securing of justice and order and freedom. Anarchism is ruled out, although the specific conceptions of the place of the state vary.

—it is universally recognized that the state stands under the judgment of God. It is not and should not be permitted to become an end in itself.

—there is a strong emphasis upon social pluralism, especially in the refusal to identify the state with the community as a whole.

Another factor is the general weakening in the present scene of the doctrinaire positions. Doctrinaire totalitarianism has no hold in the USA, and increasingly a doctrinaire conception of free society is weakened by changing events and evolving institutions.

Within this general framework, the following six points are crucial:

The meaning of freedom

The function and limits of the state

\*This article by Col. Francis P. Miller is a report on the work of a special American sub-committee dealing with the World Council topic of The Meaning of a Responsible Society for Political Life. Col. Miller's committee consists of: Prof. John C. Bennett, Pres. Buell G. Gallagher, Prof. E. E. Schattschneider, Dr. Donald Stone, Dr. Willard L. Thorp, and The Rev. Robert S. Bilheimer, Secretary of the group.

The function of the state in relation to economic life

The role of the Christian citizen

Our basic stand against totalitarianism

The role of the Church

## II. The meaning of freedom

There is the need to develop a new sense of the meaning of freedom. On different fronts there is a breakdown of confidence in its value. There are increased limitations on freedom of speech, as people feel greater reticence in talking about socialized medicine and the welfare state, not to mention socialism, or foreign policy concessions to the Soviet bloc, for fear of the stigma that might be attached to them if they do. There are limitations, also to freedom of access to the press: in one state during the last presidential election, not a single daily newspaper in the ten largest cities gave a sympathetic treatment to Stevenson's campaign. And in other instances, there are restrictions upon the freedom of assembly. People are afraid to contribute funds to or join voluntary agencies working for social or economic reform for fear that they might be found guilty through some innocent association. "McCarthyism" is a widespread and sinister threat. A tendency to specialization, in which some people concentrate only on intellectual freedom while others are preoccupied with free enterprise, further weakens the assumption which should be held by everyone.

There is, therefore, a clear need for contemporary and universally accepted definition of freedom. Too much of what goes now under the name of freedom and the defense of freedom, e.g. McCarthyism, is but a reach for power. There is a danger that the great vision which lay behind the founding of the country may be lost. In fact, our nation is a trustee of a concept and vision of freedom which gives it a mission to all of mankind. We may now be in the process of dropping this torch rather than of carrying it along, of yielding to the temptation to justify national policies in terms of narrow national interest rather than in terms of freedom. Yet a prerequisite for such a rebirth is a powerful and clear concept of the meaning of freedom for the individual and for society in today's world.

Three basic lines of thought should enter into such a concept. First, it is clear that freedom is not a static but rather a dynamic concept. To speak of freedom is to speak in terms of a continual struggle for an expanding reality. Freedom "from" certain things and freedom to achieve certain values are involved as is a constant concern for the freedom of others. The other side of freedom, namely responsibility and duty, must also be a part of the concept of freedom itself, both in terms of the ex-

ercise of power by free peoples and in the fulfillment of duty by people who are not regimented. To freeze a concept of freedom around any one of these factors is fatal to the concept itself; it must be an expanding concept, and the struggle to achieve it must be constant.

Second, various forms of freedom are so interdependent as to raise questions as to whether freedom can be divisible. Freedom in the political, economic, and intellectual spheres—as well as other freedoms—are hardly to be separated from each other without peril to each other. Whatever the theoretical aspects of the matter may be, the practical situation demands a constant struggle for freedom on all fronts. Too much economic freedom can stifle freedom of the spirit and the freedom which comes from the achievement of a general economic justice.

Third, freedom in all of its varied applications comes out of a recognition of the moral order and of faith in God. That man is a free man who understands the source of moral authority and is obedient to it. In contrast, many hold that freedom consists in the achievement of political independence and economic stability. Yet these issues in turn involve the problem of the use of national strength, whether of a nation for its own development or for the assistance of other nations, in such a way as to assure political and economic values. Yet fundamental freedom is required if national strength is to be used constructively. This must be that type of freedom based upon God's moral law and not upon the achievement of limited objectives and values.

### *III. The State: nature, limits and function*

Two paradoxes define the most important contemporary problems in regard to the nature of the democratic state. The first paradox lies in the fact that the state consists of the people who make it up and possess no power save that power which is given to it by the people, while on the other hand it always tends to take on a personality and structure of its own. The state is a memorandum of a consensus already arrived at; yet the memorandum tends to become something in itself. Put in other terms, the state is actually only one of the associations into which its people must enter. Economic and social and spiritual associations also are necessary. Yet the state tends to become the great association. This tendency has become very strong in recent years, and if it develops far enough, it will destroy the essential democratic character of the state. The crux of the problem lies in the maintenance of a proper tension between the two elements of the paradox.

The second paradox lies in the fact that the state is created to establish order and yet creates the greatest disorder. In the international scene, states have not demonstrated that they are able to live together and war is the result. The institution

which is created to establish a peaceful society becomes the most violent institution of all. No thinking about the nature of the contemporary state can be either realistic or helpful unless it deals also with the relationships for its own nature and function.

Four major limitations upon the state are evident. The first is the limitation of the judgment of God and of the moral order. Its citizens are also citizens of another Kingdom in which loyalty rightfully is owed to God. The vigorous assertions of this primary religious loyalty provides effective check upon the loyalty owed to the state and therefore the demand which the state can effectively make and enforce. Moreover, there is an over-riding character to the moral law which makes demands of the state in itself. This is a long-range matter, but as states rise and have their lives, moral demands assert themselves and affect the course and duration of states and civilizations. There is both a direct limitation upon the state residing in the loyalty of people to God over and beyond the state; and a long-range, indirect limitation in the moral qualities which God demands of human life.

A second important limitation inheres in the fact that the state should be an instrument of serving the welfare of the people. This constant assertion prevents both the disorder of excessive individualism and of excessive centralization. The demand that the instrument be controlled for the general welfare necessitates not only constant interim action to insure that end, but also a structure for the state which lends itself to service and to adaptation. In fundamental structure as well as in immediate action, instrumentalism provides a powerful check upon the state.

There is a third limitation in the insistence upon a constructive relationship between the state and the various communities and organizations which live within the state. This is true in primary measure in relation to the political minority within the state. The preservation of the rights of the minority inevitably provides a check upon the majority and upon the state which the majority represents. But the same is true also of other associations within the state. Proper relation to economic associations, to the Church, to education, all provide a network of limitation upon the function of the state.

Each national state is, finally, limited by its relationships with other states in the international community. As has been suggested above, it is of great importance that, in an increasingly inter-dependent world, every state realizes that it is not a law unto itself in international relations, but is a member of a community of nations which limits and corrects its own actions.

The function of the state must be broadly and basically defined in the kind of instrumentalist terms that have been suggested. It is the function of the state to serve the welfare of the people. This may be put in affirmative terms of the responsibility of all units of government to assure the means and op-

portunities for action in the interests of public welfare. Failure to act, and the failure to provide opportunities for action, actually limits freedom. This of course must be viewed also in the context of the various limitations upon the state, which must constantly be pressed especially in view of the tendency of the state to become over-powerful in itself. Yet for the state to fail to act in the interests of its people is to cease to perform any instrumental function of service. On the other hand, this basic function of the state provides the key to solving the recurring problems of freedom based on a moral order, of the proper tension between the state as an entity in itself and a creation of the people, and of the maintenance of the limitation of the state by the judgment of God.

This view of the state gives a large place to local government. The important thing is for people to share in the instrument of government on a widespread basis. This is possible in many ways in national government but is obviously more possible in local government. Here there is an opportunity to exercise an indirect but powerful influence upon national political life as well. Here also there is the possibility of establishing governmental functions on a decentralized basis more immediately responsive to the demands of the people and more readily to be used to meet their needs.

In the United States, the "responsible society" calls for a real two-party system in which broad political differences rather than tight ideologies are reflected. Organizationally, such a revived party system must involve the citizenry, especially at the precinct level, on a very wide basis. The obligation and the opportunity of the Christian at this point, notably in making the precinct machinery an instrument of Christian policy, is very large.

#### IV. *The Function of the State in Economic Life*

The same fundamental approach must be made to economics as to the state. The state and the economy are made for man and not man for them; their function is to serve the needs of man, and the criteria for justice in this service must be consistent with Christian ethics. Technical knowledge will contribute to the answer to the recurring problems involved, but no final answer and no universally valid system can be provided. What is good in the United States is not necessarily fitting elsewhere.

Within this general approach, the state has functions in relation to the economy all of which center upon the provision of guarantee for certain minimum human needs. Among these are private property and the general availability of certain services and utilities such as schools, roads and water, etc. Other things under the heading of security, but which must be specifically determined from time to time, must be provided for individuals who fall below accepted standards. A third category would include state guarantees achieved through government planning against the recurrence of extremes of inflation or depression. A fourth category would

involve projects provided by the state for regions or groups which cannot provide them individually. In this connection TVA would be an example of the former, public housing of the latter. It should be noted that the state may either provide the projects positively and concretely, or it may set up conditions whereby groups may themselves be enabled to carry the projects forward.

In the sphere of government action, it must be recognized that the ascending curve of government initiative can reach a point of diminishing returns in regard to the maintenance of responsible freedom. Too much government action discourages responsible freedom. High productivity is a necessity, and it is augmented in non-monopolistic fields by competition and by experiment. On the other hand, some degree of regulation and supervision is necessary. The primary responsibility of statesmanship lies in determining the point at which government action assists economic activity and the point at which such activity is stifled by state initiative.

#### V. *The Role of the Christian Citizen*

The basic problem in this area is to secure a shift of attention on the part of Christians and the churches from a merely individualistic piety to a recognition of their social responsibility; from the institutional demands of the Churches to the human objectives of the Gospel; from the desire for success and the espousal of unselfishness because "it pays," to Christian responsibility and duty. Put in other terms the basic problem is to relate the individual in his relationship to God to his responsibility for other persons and for society. Such a reorientation at a basically ethical point is the prime factor in securing intelligent and constant political interest on the part of Christians. It is frequently noted that the conscience of churchmen, lay and clerical alike, is extremely dull in regard to political injustice—a lack which points sharply to a conception of Christianity which omits social ethics. Any basic change must start precisely at this point.

Various specific functions are of the greatest importance in order that an aroused Christian conscience may make itself felt. Full participation in the democratic process of government; knowledge of the facts of public problems and the willingness to discuss them in the light of reason and truth; constant watching and criticism of government at all levels; the exercise of persuasion with public officials; active participation in the political activities of community groups; participation in groups, especially those connected with one's trade or profession, which have a public purpose and the insistence of democratic procedures within those groups; and the staunch defense of civil liberties in every place and in every time and season are all extremely important.

#### VI. *Our Basic Stand Against Totalitarianism*

Our basic problem as Christians is to define what we are for. The current temper in the U. S. stresses

# Christianity and Crisis

A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion  
537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

## EDITORIAL BOARD

REINHOLD NIEBUHR and JOHN C. BENNETT  
*Co-Chairmen*

M. SEARLE BATES LISTON POPE  
F. ERNEST JOHNSON HENRY P. VAN DUSEN  
AMOS N. WILDER

MARION HAUSNER, *Secretary*

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JAMES C. BAKER HENRY SMITH LEIPER  
HENRY SLOANE COFFIN JOHN A. MACKAY  
CHARLES W. GILKEY FRANCIS P. MILLER  
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH EDWARD L. PARSONS  
UMPHREY LEE

too much what we are against. Understanding what we stand for, we can then see the differences between our own convictions and totalitarian systems, probably never in absolute black and white terms, and always recognizing the inadequacies of our own system. We have, in other words, got to be able to say clearly what is true and precious in our own tradition, without allowing this to become a mere defense of the United States, or of western culture or of bourgeois society. Recognition that we share responsibility for the growth of communism through our failure to provide a message and programme to satisfy men and meet their needs, and recognition that in our fear of communism we are taking on the characteristics of its totalitarianism; this is essential for our positive convictions.

With this in mind, the following may be suggested as those things which are necessary to preserve; they might be called the "institutions of the responsible society":

1. The rule of law and the avoidance of arbitrary action.
2. Freedom of expression through all media.
3. The right of political minorities to organize.
4. The right of access to the truth about public affairs and national policy.
5. The recognition by the community of the strategic nature of non-political associations.
6. The right of citizens freely to organize groups for specific purposes.

7. The preservation and extension of political channels which are available to all segments of the population.

Certain notes concerning this list are important. None of these is an exclusively U.S.A. institution, or dependent upon free enterprise of any peculiarly U.S.A. institution. None of them can be preserved by favorable institutions unless there is a favorable spirit underlying them. There is no symbol that quite deals with all of them together. None of them is essentially connected with the Christian faith, but the good working of them all together depends upon the existence of Christian faith among the people.

A final note concerning the relation of Christian faith to the whole problem is necessary. No stand for or against a particular political system can be identified with Christian faith and therefore with the cause of the Christian church except in the case of a totalitarian state. This will mean that the fellowship of the Christian Church transcends all political opinion, and that political conviction cannot ideally, and should not practically, become the occasion of dividing the Church. Implications of political opinion, i.e., the idolatry involved in most totalitarianisms, may need to occasion division within the Church in the interests of truth; but political opinion in itself is not a ground for Christian division.

## VII. *The Role of the Church*

It is clear that the Church should play an active role in political life. Four points are of particular importance: the enunciation of Christian doctrine in concrete relations to political issues; the affirmation of ethical standards for public life and their application to specific instances; the continuous and fearless assertion of religious freedom; and the sending of the ablest and most devoted Christian young people into politics. This total responsibility must be undertaken in relation to all aspects of church life and membership—clergy, laity and official church bodies.

But while these functions are clear, the constant problem remains as to how far the Church should go in its judgment of or advocacy of particular political issues. The problem is acute on matters which are controversial, in which ethical values are at stake and in regard to which the Christian conscience is divided. It is also difficult because in most political judgments there are involved technical issues upon which the Church does not have particular wisdom or distinctive Christian competence. The advocacy of an active role for the Church in political life is not to be vitiated by these considerations; but these factors must be fully borne in mind as the Church fulfills its responsibility.

## Authors In This Issue

The Rev. Robert McAfee Brown is Auburn Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion at Union Theological Seminary.

Col. Francis P. Miller is Moderator of a Synod of the Presbyterian Church.

Detroit Public Library  
Book Receiving Dept.  
5201 Woodward Ave.  
Detroit 2, Mich.

27462 11-54